



**SPEECH BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR**

**PROF. THOMAS K. CHERUIYOT**

**DURING**

**THE 1<sup>ST</sup> TOWN HALL MEETING WITH STAFF**

**MONDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2023**

Salutation!

**Ladies and Gentlemen, esteemed faculty and staff,**

It is with great pleasure and a sense of profound responsibility that I stand before you today. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the warm welcome I've received since taking up my role in this great university. Our university stands as an untapped reservoir of infinite potential, occupying 1,052 acres of land, with a student population of over 12000, with strong

academic programmes which are relevant to national regional and global development; where innovation, knowledge, and passion converge to shape a future limited only by our imagination.

However despite the potential of our university being one of the best in the world it is currently faced with a myriad of challenges.

1. Lack of adequate funding for example to fully implement the 2017-2021 National Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Underfunding on recurrent and capital

development expenditure which makes it challenging to cover the wage bill and operational expenses.

2. Loss making income generating units from the farm, hotel and catering, fisheries e.t.c.
3. Dwindling student enrollment from a high of 4000 per year in 2014 to 1900 in 2021. But the Numbers are going up again.
4. While the Human resource complement in the University is one of its valuable resource yet, they need to be appreciated better. For instance, the HR audit found that

several staff have not been promoted since employment and some going back to 33 years since 1990. Several staff have qualifications and technical skills but are working in wrong departments with wrong job titles and they lack requisite motivation.

5. It has also come to my attention, and I say this with a heavy heart that within our esteemed community, there exists a discrepancy in commitment and dedication. While a vast majority here strive tirelessly, some among us have fallen prey to the seduction of complacency. The echoes of

tardiness, absenteeism, and a habitual resistance to constructive solutions and only regular complaints have reached my ears. It pains me to witness a divergence from the collective ethos of diligence and accountability that we hold dear. Each wasted resource, every missed opportunity to contribute, resonates beyond the immediate. It affects not only our institution's efficiency but also hampers the collective strides we aim to take.

6. As a leader, I know my role and I believe in fostering an environment where merit, integrity, and contribution are

the benchmarks for evaluation, not arbitrary whims or undue pressure to remove people from office. Let it be known here, today and very clearly, that I prioritize fairness and meritocracy above all else, and decisions regarding our personnel will always be guided by these principles. We will hardly arrive at our destination if we are the drivers that focus only on the rear view mirror.

Let us rekindle the flame of responsibility, where each of us stands as a guardian of our university's integrity and success. It

is only through our shared commitment to excellence that we can truly uphold the values upon which this institution was founded.

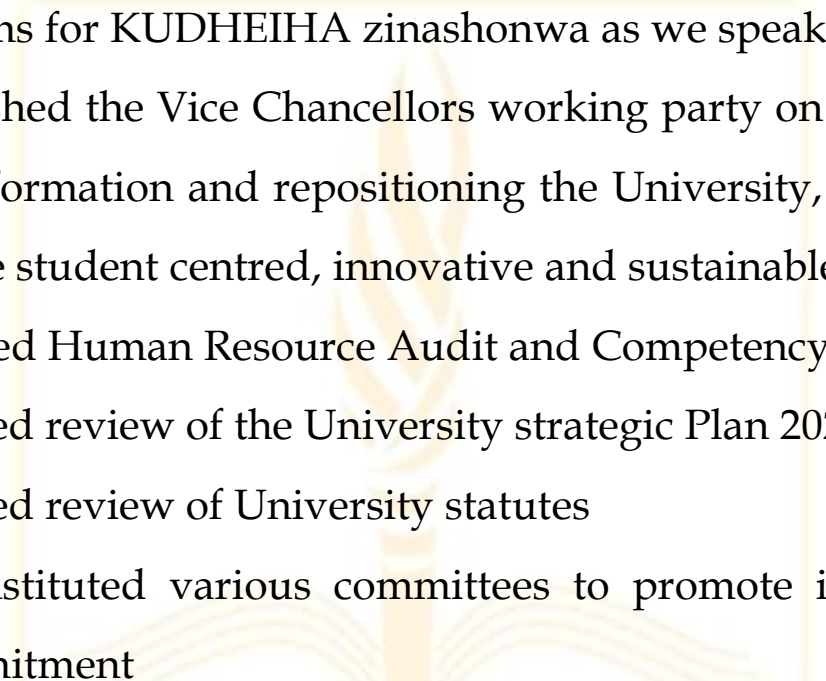
### **My Initiatives this far**

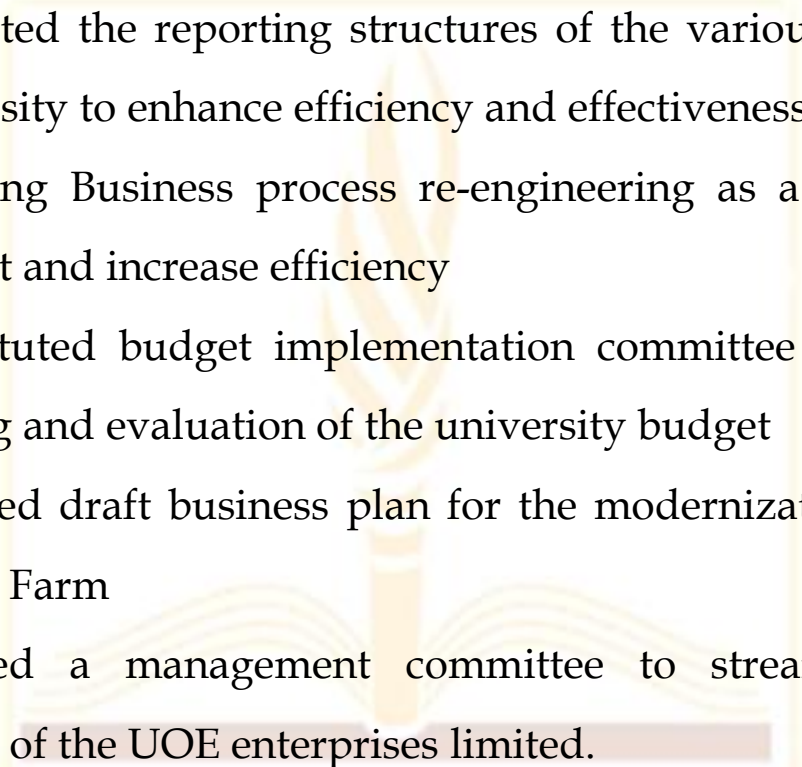
The following are some of the steps I have taken in the past few months;

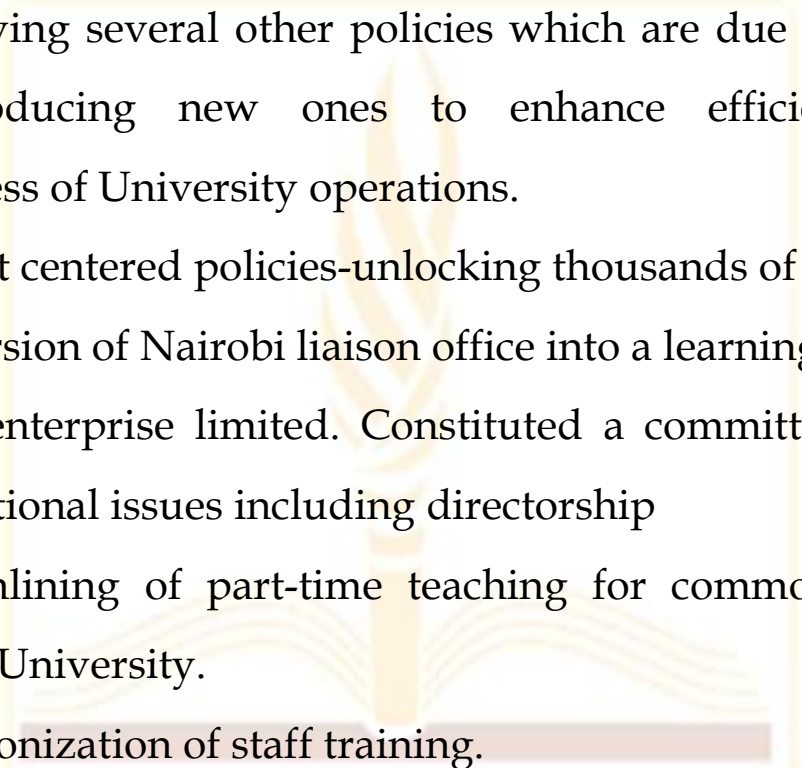
1. Reopening of gate B and F
2. Restoration of courses which were disharmonised now we have 53 up from 30



3. Review of exam policy to be considerate on penalties then restore specials and supplementaries this boosted our graduation numbers by over 1000
4. Timely disbursement of salaries and statutory deductions, your salary this month will hit your accounts by Friday
5. Review of HR historical injustices, we have addressed one such case immediately of a 33 year old injustice, mungu atusaidie we be human
6. The farm now sells milk to you as our first priority and first market. Graduate subsidised Unga will be on shelves soon.

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7. Uniforms for KUDHEIHA zinashonwa as we speak
  8. Established the Vice Chancellors working party on strategies for Transformation and repositioning the University, given the need to be student centred, innovative and sustainable.
  9. Instituted Human Resource Audit and Competency Analysis
  10. Initiated review of the University strategic Plan 2024-2028
  11. Initiated review of University statutes
  12. Reconstituted various committees to promote inclusivity and commitment

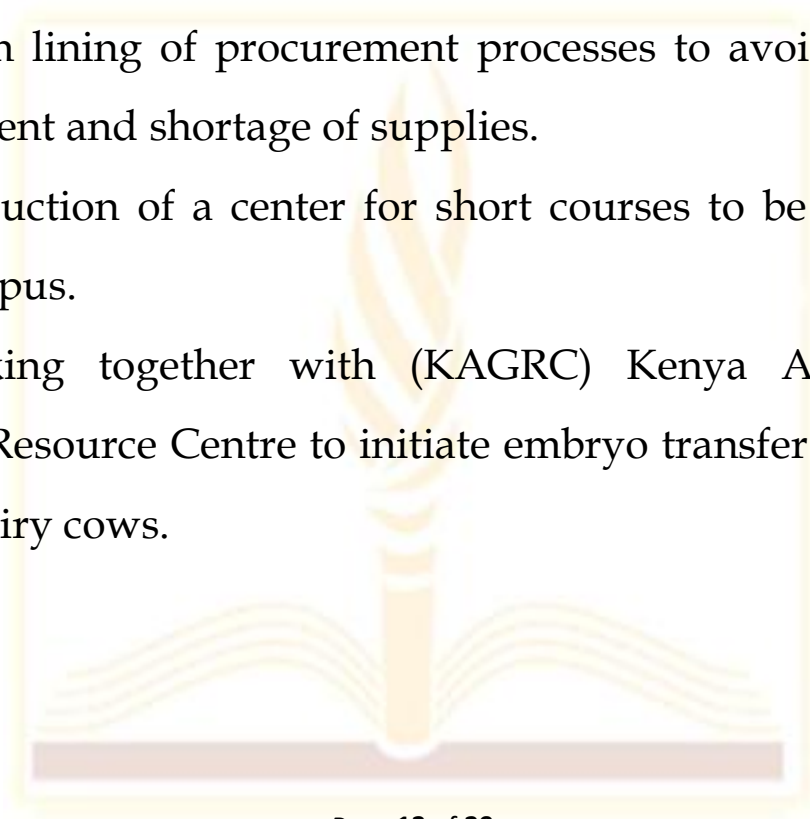
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13. Evaluated the reporting structures of the various Units of the University to enhance efficiency and effectiveness
  14. Initiating Business process re-engineering as a means to reduce cost and increase efficiency
  15. Constituted budget implementation committee to ensure monitoring and evaluation of the university budget
  16. Prepared draft business plan for the modernization of the University Farm
  17. Formed a management committee to streamline the operations of the UOE enterprises limited.

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18. Reviewing several other policies which are due for review and introducing new ones to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of University operations.
  19. Student centered policies-unlocking thousands of students.
  20. Conversion of Nairobi liaison office into a learning center
  21. UOE enterprise limited. Constituted a committee to look into operational issues including directorship
  22. Streamlining of part-time teaching for common courses across the University.
  23. Synchronization of staff training.

24. Stream lining of procurement processes to avoid wasteful procurement and shortage of supplies.

25. Introduction of a center for short courses to be located in town campus.

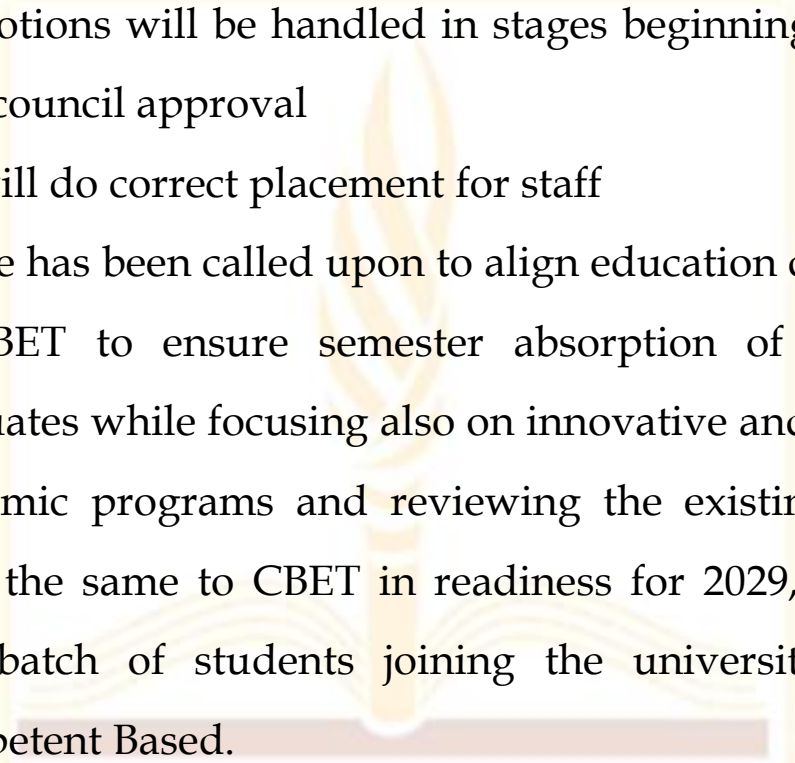
26. Working together with (KAGRC) Kenya Agricultural Genetics Resource Centre to initiate embryo transfer procedure for our dairy cows.



## **Future Plans & Actions**

My beloved staff and colleagues, as we speak many steps have already been taken in the last four months as part of strategies to transformation and reposition our university. Our areas of focus and action with respect to the above observations are such as;

1. Put the welfare of staff first you are close to my heart
2. We are paying two pending arrears immediately

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3. Promotions will be handled in stages beginning February after council approval
  4. We will do correct placement for staff
  5. Senate has been called upon to align education curriculum to CBET to ensure semester absorption of education graduates while focusing also on innovative and attractive academic programs and reviewing the existing ones to align the same to CBET in readiness for 2029, when the first batch of students joining the university will be Competent Based.

6. Academic Excellence: As this touches on our core mandate we intend to elevate academic standards, infusing our curriculum with interdisciplinary approaches, digital technology, experiential learning, and cutting-edge research opportunities. Our commitment to academic rigor will remain unwavering. We will in the process establish Centers of Excellence;

- Center of excellence in Agribusiness & Biotechnology: This program will be developed and delivered by schools of business and agriculture. The farm,



outreach center and host of collaborative research activities will be the main players. High value crop and animal production, value addition and linkage with local and export markets will be critical. For example we plan on introducing embryo transfer technology in our dairy for genetic improvement.

- Center of excellence in Science, Engineering and technology: The construction of science complex with all types of labs and equipment will be critical in SET training in UOE.

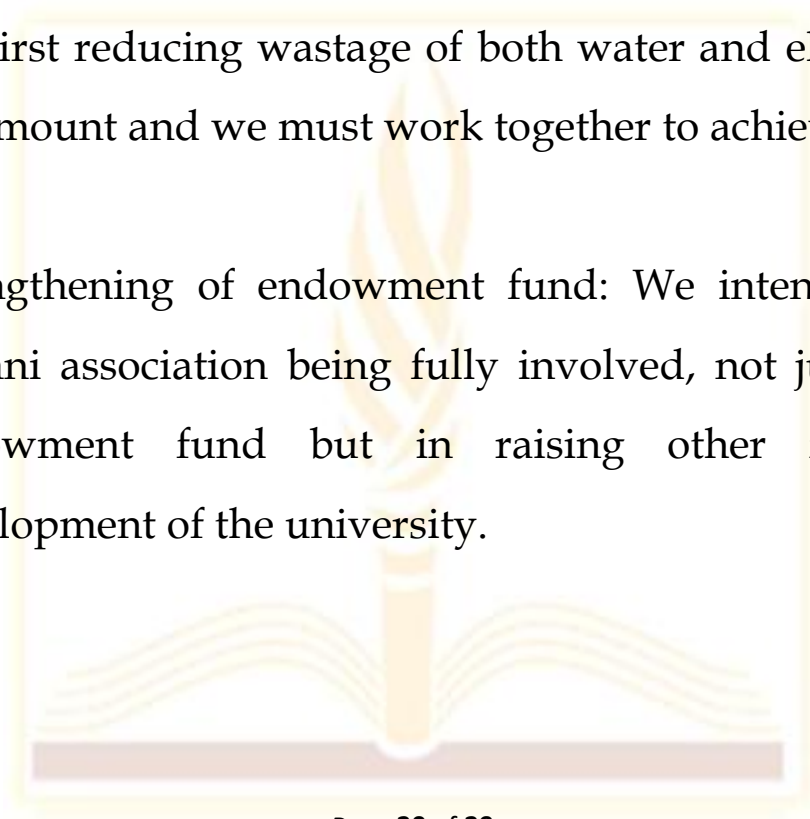
- Center of excellence in Blue economy and Fisheries;
- Center of excellence in Environment, natural resource and climate change,
- Center of excellence in Specialist Medical Sciences:  
Proposing establishment of a specialist university hospital which facilitate training of Bsc Nursing, Bsc Midwifery, Bsc. Medical Laboratory Science, Bsc Orthopaedic Medicine, Public Health, Pharmacy, Ophthalmology among other programs which by

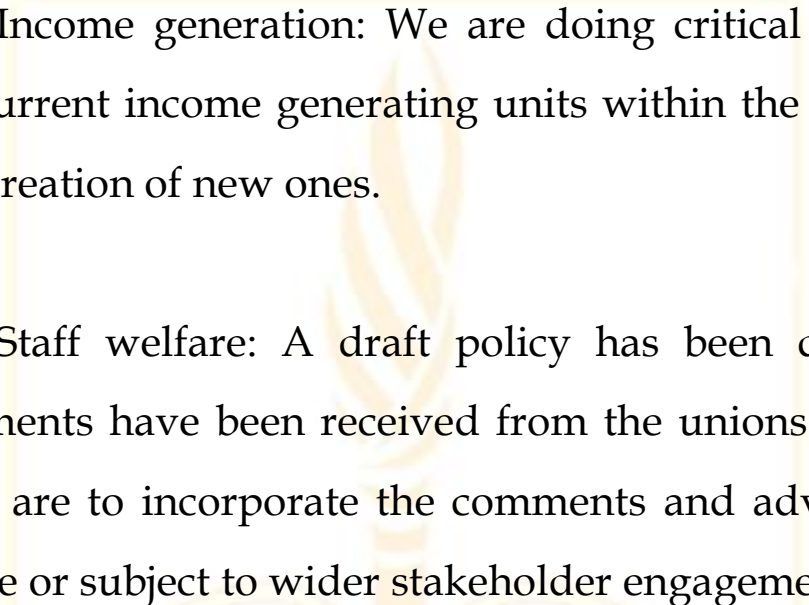
nature are more specialist. Sports science will also be a component of this.

7. Re-organization of the university and rationalization of staff: we will create efficiencies, conducive atmosphere for staff, and ensure excellent working conditions; this is already ongoing!
8. Greening of the University: The process is on course to ensure that we sensitize staff and students on going green

but first reducing wastage of both water and electricity is paramount and we must work together to achieve this.

9. Strengthening of endowment fund: We intend to have alumni association being fully involved, not just for the endowment fund but in raising other funds for development of the university.



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10. Income generation: We are doing critical review of the current income generating units within the university and creation of new ones.
11. Staff welfare: A draft policy has been developed; comments have been received from the unions. Our next steps are to incorporate the comments and advance it to senate or subject to wider stakeholder engagement.

12. Collaborations, networks and partnerships: We have begun reviewing all MoUs and their current status.
13. Modernization of university farm (to include value addition and PoS): We intend to recruit competent teams to complement running of the farm while raising adequate capital for the same.

To achieve these ambitious goals, among others as I have but only mentioned a few we must embrace change. We'll leverage technology, foster interdisciplinary collaborations, and

empower our students and faculty to push boundaries and explore uncharted territories of knowledge. We will as well work hand in hand with the government and all relevant institutions to make UOE the University of Choice for expert talent anywhere.

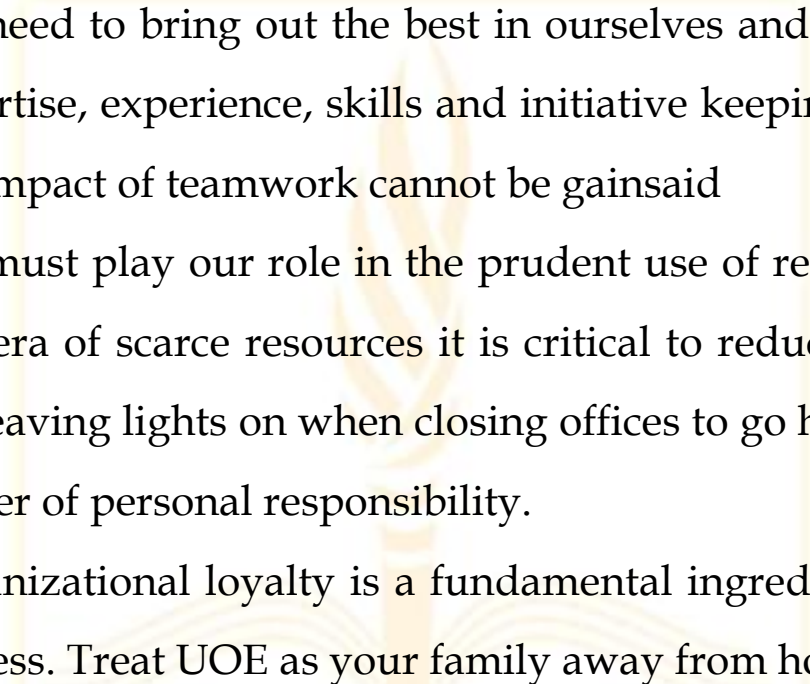
### **Expectations on Staff Participation**

But let me be clear; this transformation is not a one-person job. It's a collective effort—a joint venture that requires the dedication, passion, and expertise of each and every one of you.

Your insights, your commitment, and your creativity will be the driving force behind our success.

1. All of us must play our respective roles effectively and efficiently.
2. Student welfare. Our students are our most important stakeholders. They are the reason for our being in the university. Let us embrace a student centered approach to our operations and give our students the best experience.



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3. We need to bring out the best in ourselves and utilize the expertise, experience, skills and initiative keeping in mind the impact of teamwork cannot be gainsaid
  4. We must play our role in the prudent use of resources. In this era of scarce resources it is critical to reduce wastage i.e. leaving lights on when closing offices to go home it is a matter of personal responsibility.
  5. Organizational loyalty is a fundamental ingredient of our success. Treat UOE as your family away from home.

Now, I know what you might be thinking—transformation, visibility, sustainability—sounds like a tall order, but finding the right balance is crucial. As much as we're passionate about our mission here, remember to take a breather, enjoy a good cup of coffee (or tea, for the purists among us), and occasionally embrace the chaos in a way that doesn't involve spreadsheets or deadlines. However, as Individuals ensure you take charge of your destiny. Invest however small towards your future because retirement for each of us is a reality. Start

early and improve the living conditions at homes and your families. At the end of the day it is family that counts.

In closing, I assure you that my door is always open. I welcome your ideas, your feedback, and your concerns. Together, we will navigate this journey, ensuring that every step we take aligns with our shared vision of a university that not only educates minds but also transforms lives. I am filled with optimism and excitement for the future that we'll build together. Let's embark on this transformative journey with

unwavering determination and a shared commitment to excellence.

Thank you for your attention and your consistent dedication. I extend my gratitude to the government for their unwavering support, the University council and board of management.

Finally this is my mantra: “Ask yourself not what UOE can do for you but what you can do for UOE”!!!

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New year to all. Thank you and God Bless you!

Yours Faithfully,

**Prof: Thomas K. Cheruiyot (Ph.D)**

**Vice-Chancellor**

